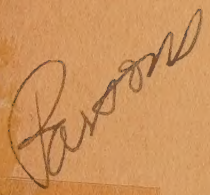
EDINBURGH 1937

THE STORY OF THE SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER.

By

HUGH MARTIN



EDINBURGH 1937

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
Graduate Theological Union

https://archive.org/details/edinburgh1937sto00unse

THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER

EDINBURGH 1937

EDINBURGH 1937

THE STORY OF THE SECOND WORLD
CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER
HELD IN EDINBURGH
AUGUST 3RD–18TH, 1937

BY

HUGH MARTIN

JOINT HONORARY SECRETARY OF "FRIENDS OF REUNION"

Author of
The Parables of the Gospels
The Kingdom Without Frontiers, etc.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY THE
ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT PRESS
58 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

BX
6
W75
1937j

First Published October 1937

Printed in Great Britain

PREFACE

I REGARD it as a great honour to have been invited by the Committee of the Edinburgh Conference to prepare a popular account of its proceedings. But I am at least equally conscious of my inadequacy for so difficult and so responsible a task. There is nothing harder than to convey the vision and inspiration of a great gathering to those who were not there. The thing "breaks through language and escapes."

One of the greatest of my problems has been to know what to do about the Report in which is summed up the findings of the Conference. It occupies fifty-two closely printed pages and clearly could not be reproduced in full in such a short volume as this had to be. Yet it seemed almost equally impossible to abbreviate this already very condensed document in which every word was carefully weighed, and which deals with issues of great complexity. I have done my best to give some impression of the ground covered in outlines expressed as far as possible in the words of the Report. I have passed over sections which are of less interest to the general reader, however important they may be to the theological specialist. But I would urge all those interested to procure a copy of the full Report, which is worthy of the most careful study.[1]

[1] Copies can be obtained (free) from the Secretary, World Conference on Faith and Order, Cheyney Court, Winchester.

I have not been concerned here to state my own views on the subjects under discussion; that would have been a comparatively easy task, but one of singularly little value. I have essayed rather to present a fair and balanced picture of what happened at the Conference. Yet at best it can only be one man's impression of an event too significant for any one man to compass it all. For what is here written I am alone responsible, and it in no way commits the Faith and Order Movement or its executive. For a full record of the proceedings reference must be made to the official volume which Canon Hodgson is editing.

I have made use of numerous documents and reports, in addition to my own copious notes taken at the time, but it is only fair to acknowledge my special indebtedness to the admirable reports published daily in the *Scotsman*.

H. M.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	A Group of the Conference	*Frontispiece*
	Preface	5
	Introduction by the Archbishop of York	9
CHAPTER I.	The Conference Assembles	11
II.	From Edinburgh to Edinburgh, 1910–1937	19
III.	The Task Before Us	29
IV.	The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ	36
V.	The Church of Christ and the Word of God	42
VI.	The Communion of Saints	52
VII.	The Ministry and the Sacraments	57
VIII.	The Church's Unity in Life and Worship	72
IX.	The Last Session	82
X.	What does "Edinburgh" mean for the Churches?	86
XI.	An Affirmation of Unity	97

INTRODUCTION

EVERY one concerned was deeply grateful when Mr Martin undertook to write the brief account of the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order. We knew it would be readable, accurate and vivid. And so it is.

I could wish that all English-speaking Christians would read this book, whether or not they also read the fuller Report that will be issued more officially. They would gain from it very much of the impression that the Conference made on those who shared in it—an experience which they will not forget. Then if they will read and study the official volume they will do so with minds attuned as ours were when we gave to the Report and to the Affirmation our whole-hearted assent.

All thinking Christians must agree that Christian Unity is a matter of urgency. The Faith and Order Movement is the greatest enterprise which has this goal. And the Conference at Edinburgh showed clearly where we stand, what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. Mr Martin's book brings all this vividly before us. May it be widely read, and may those who read be led by it to prayer, to study and to effort.

WILLIAM EBOR.

17th September 1937

EDINBURGH 1937

CHAPTER I

THE CONFERENCE ASSEMBLES

I

"I BELIEVE in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord. . . . I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church. . . ."

The words were uttered in the accents of a score of languages and by a thousand voices. Side by side stood Chinese and Japanese, Swede and American, Czechoslovak and Indian, Russian, Briton, Dutchman, men of nearly fifty nationalities. They came "from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South." Representatives of the most diverse religious traditions joined in the declaration of faith—Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Orthodox, Baptist. The service itself was conducted by a Presbyterian; the lessons were read by a representative of the Eastern Churches and by a Lutheran; the sermon was preached by an Anglican. Perhaps never in all the centuries since it was first penned has the ancient Creed been repeated by a more widely representative gathering. The Second World Conference on Faith and Order had gathered in the High Kirk of Edinburgh for its first solemn act of worship.

The majestic grey-brown columns and walls of old St Giles' echoed to the moving strains of the Old Hundredth :

> All people that on earth do dwell,
> Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
> Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,
> Come ye before him and rejoice.

The voice of the minister led us in prayer: "Almighty and everlasting God, who by Thy Holy Spirit didst preside in the first Synod of the apostles and presbyters at Jerusalem, and hast promised to be with Thy Church always unto the end of the world: vouchsafe we pray Thee unto Thy servants about to meet in conference, Thy gracious presence and benediction; deliver them from all error, pride and prejudice; enlighten them with wisdom from above; fill their hearts with the spirit of unity and peace; and so order all their doings that Thy Kingdom may be advanced and Thy people established and comforted in their most holy faith, until at length all Thy dispersed sheep shall be gathered unto one fold of the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory for ever." . . .

Now the Archbishop of York is in the pulpit. His words are searching and stirring. Our divisions, he reminds us, obscure our witness to the one Gospel we all proclaim. "How can the Church call men to worship the one God, if it is calling to rival shrines? How can it claim to bridge the divisions in human society—divisions between Greek and barbarian, bond and free, between black and white, Aryan and non-Aryan,

employer and employed—if when men are drawn into it they find that another division has been added to the old ones—a division of Catholic from Evangelical, or Episcopalian from Presbyterian or Independent. A Church divided in its manifestation to the world cannot render its due service to God or to man, and for the impotence which our sin has brought upon the Church through divisions in its outward aspect we should be covered with shame and driven to repentance."

Yet there was also much for which we had cause to give thanks. "The record of the last ten years, since the former Conference on Faith and Order met at Lausanne, has been a time of progressive unification. . . . The occurrence of the two World Conferences (at Oxford and Edinburgh) in one summer is itself a manifestation of the *Una Sancta*, the holy fellowship of those who worship God in Jesus Christ and look to Him as the only Saviour of the world. . . . Let us never forget that, though the purpose of our meeting is to consider the causes of our divisions, yet what makes possible our meeting is our unity. We could not seek union if we did not already possess unity. Those who have nothing in common do not deplore their estrangement. It is because we are one in allegiance to one Lord that we seek and hope for the way of manifesting that unity in our witness to Him before the world. . . . It is not we who can heal the wound in His Body. We confer and deliberate, and that is right. But it is not by contrivance or adjustment that we can unite the Church of God. It is only by coming closer to Him that

we can come nearer to one another. . . . It is not by understanding one another, but by more fully understanding Him that we are led towards our goal."

So at the outset we were led in penitence and faith and hope to the feet of our one Lord.

II

After the service the delegates streamed along the ancient High Street and the Lawnmarket to the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland. The statue of John Knox stood in the quadrangle regarding us, one might be forgiven for imagining, with some bewilderment and even disapproval. What would he have said if he had been in his old pulpit at St Giles' that morning? They did not have œcumenical fellowship and worship in his day! As for the indignation of Jenny Geddes, if she had observed the goings-on in the pulpit of St Giles' during the next fortnight, it does not bear thinking about. A whole battery of stools would not have been sufficient to hurl!

The Assembly Hall itself, by a happy augury, is the official council chamber of a Church united since the previous World Conference by the coming together of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church. In every way it was a happy meeting-place, like the hospitable city of Edinburgh which lies stretched beneath the Mound in one of the most wonderful civic vistas in the world.

There were present at the Conference 414

delegates from 122 Christian communions in 43 different countries—not reckoning the members of the Youth Group or other visitors. It is important to realise that it was a Conference of the Churches—of officially appointed representatives, not of self-chosen individuals with a love for conferences.

Four hundred years had gone by since Western Christendom broke up at the Reformation, and more than twice as many since the division between East and West. We inherited a tangle of disagreement and misunderstanding.

Delegates were present from the Eastern Orthodox Churches, picturesque figures, bearded, clad in flowing robes, with gold crosses gleaming on the dark garments. The Old Catholic Church was represented and the great European Protestant Churches, Lutheran and Reformed. The Churches with which we are more familiar in the British Isles had sent their quotas—Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregationalist and Friends —all of them great international bodies and most of them with delegations from several lands. Every quarter of the globe was represented.

There were two great absentees. The German Evangelical Church, to our deep regret, had not been able to send delegates. We regretted still more the occasion of their absence. To be without their help in discussing the themes before us was to labour under a heavy handicap. The Archbishop of York spoke for us all when he said that we prayed that the German Churches might have wisdom and courage for the difficult days before

them ; that we thanked them for the constancy of their witness, and that we prayed that we might follow their example of faithfulness and endurance.

The Roman Catholic Church was also unrepresented, by its own choice. But though it felt unable to send delegates, the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh sent a cordial letter of greeting. He had hoped, he wrote, that he would be able to meet in some way the delegates of the Conference, but this had proved impossible, owing to the crowded nature of the programme. " This has unfortunately made it impossible for me to explain personally the position of the Church of Rome and why it has not participated in this Conference. I shall, however, be grateful if your Grace (*i.e.* the Archbishop of York) will convey my regrets to the Conference and assure the delegates that my most sincere prayer is that God may guide them in their deliberations and in their search for truth in the service of Christ our Lord."

Many of us felt regret, also, that the younger Churches of the East were not more fully represented. Japan, China and India had sent us some of their most distinguished sons who played a most effective part, but that only made us long that their numbers might have been larger. What they had to say to us might well have been amplified.

It was also something of a mystery to find so few women delegates. Why do women take so small a part in the assemblies of the Churches, when they do so much of their everyday work ?

It was a thrilling task as the days went by to identify one figure after another in the great gather-

ing, and to realise how many were there of eminence not only in their own land and communions but throughout the Christian world, as writers, theologians or Church leaders. It would fill many pages of this volume merely to mention their names.

III

" We do not meet at Edinburgh," wrote Canon Leonard Hodgson in one of the preliminary pamphlets, " as an international congress of theologians assembled to enjoy the intellectual stimulus of discussion. We meet as representatives of different Christian Churches moved by a common determination to discover how far loyalty to truth demands that our disagreement . . . should continue to keep us from full union and communion with one another." It was with a desire to find agreement that we reopened at Edinburgh discussion of controversial issues on which the Church had split at the time of the Reformation, as well as before and since. We met not only to state the position of our several Churches. That indeed was inevitable. It was really impossible to assume, as some desired, that that task had been accomplished. Statements had been made at Lausanne and since, but they had not been read by all the delegates with the attention they deserved. Some present were sharing in close interdenominational discussion and fellowship for the first time. We had to do a great deal of explaining of ourselves to each other.

Yet we were there not only to reaffirm the value

of our own traditions. We were there also to reach forward to a full understanding of the Gospel which as yet none of us in our separation possessed. Face to face we hoped to reach a degree of understanding which is not possible through the medium of books alone. We hoped to gain some new insight which we might carry back to the Churches which had sent us.

IV

Dr Garvie, the veteran leader of a host of good causes, than whom no one has done more for Christian unity, deputy chairman at "Lausanne 1927," takes the chair. He pays tribute to the pioneers of the Faith and Order Movement, who have prepared the way for us. He then nominates the Archbishop of York as chairman of the Conference, a proposal which is carried by acclamation. The Archbishop takes the chair and calls upon representatives of the Scottish Churches who voice in gracious words their welcome to Edinburgh.

The Conference is constituted.

CHAPTER II

FROM EDINBURGH TO EDINBURGH, 1910–1937

I

As we assembled for the first meeting the thoughts of many went back to another conference held in that same Hall twenty-seven years before. For it was at the World Missionary Conference of 1910 that Faith and Order may be said to have been born. Of course there were movements towards Christian unity before that date, and it was their work, and notably the work of the world-wide Student Christian Movement, that made possible "Edinburgh 1910." But everything received then a new impetus. From then must be dated a new era in the missionary enterprise, and from then the movement for Christian unity acquired a quite new and more statesmanlike form.

Under God, this was due mainly to the vision of Bishop Brent of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, nobly supported by Robert Gardiner, a layman of the same Church. Returning from the Edinburgh Conference Bishop Brent secured the support of the governing body of his Church. Invitations to co-operate were issued to "all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." The outcome of that initiative was at long last the

coming together of the first World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne in 1927. There 400 officially appointed representatives of about one hundred Churches met for three weeks to promote mutual understanding.

The greatest achievement of that Conference was the mere fact of its meeting. It was the first officially representative œcumenical conference on any wide scale to seek the closer unity of Christ's Church. In view of the short time at the disposal of the Conference, and the novelty of the task being attempted, the seven Reports "received" by the Conference from its commissions are remarkable documents. They were an attempt to register agreements and disagreements, and they have formed an invaluable basis for further study. But most valuable of all was the spirit of fellowship in Christ engendered there, which has borne fruit in many and varied ways in Christian thought and actions.

II

The 1927 Conference appointed a Continuation Committee which held regular meetings and directed a continuous process of further study. In particular the Reports of Lausanne were circulated to the Churches with a request for comments. In due course formal replies, most of them long and careful statements, were received from some forty Churches.[1] In the light of these replies the programme for 1937 was drafted.

[1] These have been published in a volume entitled *Convictions*, edited by Canon Leonard Hodgson. (S.C.M. Press, 8s. 6d.)

It became clear that there were three main lines of approach to the whole problem. The Churches in Great Britain, speaking broadly, were agreed in regarding questions of "order"—that is, the nature of the organisation of the Church, its ministry and sacraments, and so forth—as the crucial issues. There was sufficient agreement in matters of "faith," as expressed in the acceptance by all of the substance of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, to form a basis for unity.

The Churches of Europe, however, believed that the theological issues raised at the Reformation regarding the nature of faith and grace and the like were just as vital as the doctrines and facts covered by the Creeds. They held that fuller unity must be conditioned by fuller theological agreement. The attitude of Anglo-Saxon Christendom was thought, and sometimes said, to be superficial.

The Churches of America, in the third place, were characterised as a whole by yet another attitude. Neither faith nor order was the chief obstacle to unity between many of their denominations, but questions of history and culture.

The programme drafted for Edinburgh took account of all these types of obstacle to unity. Four main subjects were mapped out. The first two dealt with the doctrines of Grace and of the Word of God, regarded as the most vital by Europe. The third concerned the Ministry and the Sacraments, thought of as central by Britain. The Church's Unity in Life and Worship, the fourth main subject, was intended to deal with the American preoccupations. Commissions were

appointed to deal with these subjects and to prepare material. This rough and useful classification of "concerns" must not be pressed too far, and in the event all sections of the Movement participated in the work on each subject and realised its importance, even if differences of judgment as to their relative urgency remained.

III

All this process of international and œcumenical study was of the greatest possible value in preparing for Edinburgh. But the preparation was not all in the realm of thought. Striking progress was made in the realm of action. The record of the ten years since Lausanne is one of progressive unification. It was, to use the title of a valuable detailed report presented to the Conference, "a decade of objective progress in Church unity."[1] The consummated unions were naturally chiefly in the easier cases between Churches of similar polity, but important steps had been taken by Churches of widely different traditions. Even if the cause of unity had been suffering defeat, it would still be our duty to press forward, but there is ground for hope and encouragement in the definite progress attained.

The first chapter of the Report of the Edinburgh Conference is devoted to this "Ten Years' Progress," and reference must be made to that and to the much fuller record in Dr Douglass' book. Here

[1] By H. Paul Douglass. (Harper Bros., New York.)

there is space for only the briefest of statements. Some of the achievements have been of mutual recognition and intercommunion between Churches as, for example, between the Anglican Communion on the one hand and the Old Catholic Churches, or the Church of Finland, on the other. Notable corporate unions were consummated between the Scottish Presbyterian Churches in 1929, the English Methodists in 1932, three Churches in Canada in 1925. The formation of the United Church of China in 1927, combining numerous separated bodies, is also noteworthy.

" While, then," says the Report, " the significance of the progress made must not be overstated, the trend towards unity is nevertheless marked both in magnitude and in character. It is widespread throughout the world. It occurs in a wide variety of forms. It is vital, relevant to actual situations. It is making increasing appeal to the heart and conscience of all Christian men." When all allowance has been made for delays, defeats and disappointments, it has yet to be recorded with thankfulness that the tide has unmistakably turned.

IV

Something further should be said about the historical setting of the Edinburgh Conference.

" When the Lausanne Conference met in 1927 it met on the crest of a world-wide post-war wave of enthusiasm for unity and brotherhood in every department of life, secular as well as religious. The

following ten years have witnessed in many quarters and in many directions a waning of that enthusiasm, of which the recrudescence of nationalism in the political sphere is one example." [1] In spite of the progress referred to above, there is no doubt that in some respects the mental and spiritual atmosphere is less favourable to the discussion of unity than in 1927. Not only nationalism but even denominationalism has revived. There is a growing tendency to emphasise differences and magnify difficulties. Perhaps it was just as well that we should approach our task at Edinburgh in an atmosphere of cold realism without much initial emotional stimulus.

Nor could we fail to be sobered by the international situation. War was raging in Spain and China, powerful movements in many lands sought to create an order in which allegiance to the State is supreme, and religion, if tolerated at all, is expected to take an entirely subordinate place; and in wellnigh every land, East and West, there is a growing secularisation of human life; perhaps never has the Christian Church been confronted by such a challenge to the very citadel of its faith.

It was not the task of the Edinburgh Conference to discuss these issues. That had been done by the remarkable sister gathering at Oxford in the previous month. But the delegates at Edinburgh were by no means forgetful of the stark realities of the world situation.

It is true that much of our discussion was inevitably couched in technical theological terms.

[1] Canon Hodgson in a preliminary pamphlet.

The man in the street, or even the man in the pew, may be forgiven if he fails to see the relevance of much of our work to life as he knows it. But in sober truth the high theological themes we considered are much more vital to international politics than even most Christians realise; many of our current problems in international relations, in politics and in sociology are ultimately religious and theological. After all, the ordinary citizen might get no impression of immediate relevance from the technical discussions of a congress of doctors or scientists, who might nevertheless be concerned with issues of life and death.

Even in the actual programme current affairs were not neglected. One of the first acts of the Conference was to hear a statement, carefully prepared by a group and read by Dr Leiper of the Congregational Church of America, dealing with "The Church's Witness in the World To-day." This striking document ensured, as it was intended to do, that our consideration of our immediate task was conducted in full consciousness of the condition of the world in which the Church's work to-day has to be done. It outlined in clear and unequivocal terms the realities of the hour and "the widespread dissolution of the spiritual bonds, and accepted organising principles which have hitherto controlled and given meaning to common life." Side by side with this disintegration was the rise of the immensely powerful totalitarian State, in Japan, Turkey, Russia, Poland, Italy, Germany and elsewhere, embodying features that are "in the last resort incompatible with the belief

in the sovereignty of God or with a Christian view of the dignity of man." The evils of racialism and war are other symptoms of the same fundamental disease.

It is in such a world that the Church lives and witnesses and faces its tremendous tasks. In spite of all its failures, if a world view be taken, there are remarkable ingatherings of men and women into its ranks, notably in Africa and the East, and a great awakening of spiritual life. "If the last century saw a great growth in secularism it saw also in the missionary movement throughout the world the most remarkable expansion of the Church in all Christian history. . . . Even in the West the record is not one of retreat and failure but of large advance also. "Christians may be penitent for their sloth and divisions and sensitive to the often ill-adapted methods they employ; they may be aware of hypocrisy and insincerity; but nothing may be allowed to dim the brightness of the fact that the heart of the Church's message is not merely relevant to the need of the world, but is that which alone can help and heal." "That the Church should in many lands to-day be persecuted, her freedom invaded, and her witness inhibited, is perhaps a proof that, in spite of all her weaknesses she is at the heart of the world's struggle." "Let us therefore approach these great themes that invite our thought and prayer in a spirit of desperate earnestness."

The two speeches that followed the statement pressed home its implications.

Bishop Azariah of the Anglican Church in India,

and himself an Indian, an impressive figure in his purple cassock, made a moving appeal for unity. "We want you to take us seriously when we say that the problem is full of life and death for us." Out of 350,000,000 in India, only 6,000,000 are Christians. In China the proportion is even less. "It is necessary for us to form a united front against the anti-Christian forces that confront us on every side."

Pastor Marc Boegner of the Reformed Church in France spoke with the clarity, the eloquence and the impressiveness of the French orator at his best. He was concerned with the European situation. He spoke of political, economic and spiritual developments. "From the point of view of a dynamic Christianity, what must be the witness which all the Churches must bear to Jesus Christ in this world, the world which we are to keep before our eyes? To ask the question moves us at once to humiliation and repentance, and to make clear the call to manifest to the world, in one faith and one common consecration, the unity of the Body of Christ."

Let it be made clear once for all that this was no closed circle of theologians amusing themselves with an academic debate. They were indeed men in deadly earnest in a real world. Again and again that emerged in the course of the discussions. And the very last act of the Conference in its business sessions was to adopt this declaration: "We have met at a time of great strain and distress alike in Europe and in the Far East. We watch with sympathy and sorrow the menace and the

horrors of war. We are persuaded that war never occurs except as a result and expression of that sin from which Christ came to redeem the world. We therefore call all men, and ourselves before all others, to pray that God may give to us and to all men the love of justice, the readiness to forgive, the knowledge of His will, and the courage to obey it. For all who bear rule in their nations we ask the abundant bestowal of these gifts, and we pray that, despite all earthly causes of estrangement, Christians in all lands may be united in the fellowship of prayer and obedience."

CHAPTER III

THE TASK BEFORE US

On Wednesday morning, 4th August, the Conference assembled for prayers in the Assembly Hall, preparatory to a session at which the nature of the programme was explained to us and various practical arrangements made.

I

This may be a convenient point to say something about the morning and evening devotional services. During the six days when the Conference was meeting in sections the morning prayers were conducted in St Giles' Cathedral, and a great gain it was to be allowed such frequent use of that lovely and worshipful building. On the days when the Conference met in full session in the Assembly Hall morning prayers were also held in that Hall. Evening devotions each day were in the Assembly Hall.

Great pains had been taken to make the most of these unhurried periods of prayer and recollection. A committee, consisting of Dean Sperry of Harvard, Dean Bate of York and Dean Brilioth of Lund, was in charge. They had prepared a volume of prayers in English, French and German,

and a form of service for the evening. Representatives of different religious traditions had been selected to lead our worship. The services in the morning were characterised by a remarkable and refreshing variety as Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Orthodox, Congregationalist, Methodist or Friend in turn took charge. Even the variety of the vestments, or lack of them, helped us to realise the varied elements in the Conference.

In the evenings the Committee felt that a more impersonal form of service would be appropriate, after the busy day. A form of Anglican compline had been prepared which the ministers were expected to follow. It may, perhaps, be questioned if this was an altogether wise plan. Not all of the ministers, nor many of the Conference, were accustomed to such a service, and a simpler form of " family prayers " might on occasion have been more congenial. But again there was variety in the conductors if not in the service. The ministers were drawn from America, England, Denmark, Ireland, Czechoslovakia, India, Australia and Russia.

In these hours of worship when our discussions were hushed and we joined in adoration of our one Father, we were very conscious of our true fundamental unity in Christ.

II

But we must return to the morning of 4th August.

No praise could be too great for the work of Canon Hodgson, who was formally appointed as

secretary of the Conference at the outset of the session. His untiring labours for years beforehand, his gifts of organisation, his deep theological and spiritual insight, and his gift of sympathy with the most varied traditions, had much to do with the success of the Conference. Those who knew most about the difficulties of large-scale organisation were loudest in their praise of the magnificent efficiency of the machinery. With Canon Hodgson must be remembered his colleagues, Mr Floyd Tomkins, the secretary in America, Professor Clavier, and Miss Dundas, the office secretary, and her assistants. Much of the smooth working of the Conference was due also to the indefatigable labours behind the scenes of Canon Tatlow, as financial secretary, assisted by Miss Latford. The skill of the translators who were prepared without a moment's hesitation to turn an English speech into French or German, or the other way round, was a perpetual source of wonder. Some of the speeches were greatly improved in the process!

The Conference also at this session appointed its vice-chairmen, men honoured in all the Churches, who then supported the Archbishop of York on the platform. They were: Bishop Aulen of the Church of Sweden; Pastor Boegner, President of the Protestant Federation of France; Dr Garvie of the Congregational Union of England; Archbishop Germanos, the Metropolitan of Thyateria and chief spokesman of the Orthodox Churches at the Conference; and Dr Ross Stevenson of the Presbyterian Church of America.

III

The method of working proposed by the Committee, and now explained to us, was that the reports of the preparatory commissions should be referred at once to four sections into which the Conference would be divided. This plan amply justified itself in practice. In these sections, and even more in the groups into which they were themselves divided, it was possible for the delegates to get to know one another personally and to realise more intimately what lay behind the strange convictions of others. In informal interchange and questioning understanding grew rapidly. So during six crowded days there took shape reports of the sections for submission to the Conference as a whole. After discussion in full session each report was referred to a drafting committee for revision and then once more presented for adoption to the full Conference. Most of the work of the Conference was thus done in private—and all the more effectively for that; but the formulated results were presented for public discussion to the entire Conference.

The aim of the Conference was to reach completely agreed statements, even though the only way to this was to include side by side irreconcilable views. The Conference could not legislate for the Churches, so there was no object in carrying resolutions by the vote of a majority. Apart from questions of procedure, therefore, nothing was regarded as accepted by the Conference if

there was a single hostile vote. The way to convert a hostile vote into a favourable one was to include in the statement an expression of the view held by the dissentient. So the Report ultimately accepted unanimously by the Conference may be regarded as containing a reliable presentation of the beliefs of the many Churches represented, both in their agreements and in their divergences. In this procedure the Conference was surely wise, for we can never get over our differences until we know what they are and can state the varying views in a way that is regarded as fair by those who hold them.

"Let us be careful to remember," urged the Archbishop in explaining the programme, "that we are not a society for theological discussion with no further end in view. We meet to consider the grounds of our disunion and to find the way to union. . . . Our aim must be to combine loyalty to the truth which we have received with readiness to learn also the truth which others have received but we ourselves have either missed or failed to appreciate in full."

Pointing out that in the titles of three of the sections the word "Church" was prominent, the Archbishop said we might be in danger of taking the Church itself for granted and of concentrating attention upon its various functions. "The ten-year-long discussion since Lausanne has persuaded me that the main subject of difference is the nature of the Church itself, and that all our other differences flow from this." We must keep prominently in view the question of the essential nature of the

Church—a judgment which clearly commended itself to a large part of the Conference. "Many of our different views," continued the Archbishop, "are not antagonistic but mutually complementary. Let us take care to make this plain where we find it to be true. Then where our differences represent incompatible positions we can show these against the background of a growing unity."

IV

After the Archbishop's address a general discussion was opened by Professor Boulgakoff of the Russian Orthodox Church, once Professor of Economics in Moscow, but banished by the Government and now an exile in Paris, where he is Dean of the Russian Theological Institute. "We have not to sacrifice the truth," he declared. "We have to look for the possibility of mutual understanding."

Dr Garvie followed. "As I believe in one God I am compelled to believe in one Church, and to me the divisions of Christendom are a contradiction of my fundamental conception of God. We must work for unity."

A Lutheran minister from Strasbourg came next, Professor Menegoz, who urged that a mere federation of the Churches would eternalise our differences. We must seek a fuller unity than that.

Then came a Baptist from New York, the Rev. E. A. Hanley. "Thousands of ministers in America are perplexed and almost overwhelmed by a sense of futility." Wherever he had been

pastor he had found too many Churches, and inefficient ones, and the appeal of the glorious Gospel failed to come home to the hearts of men. "I am here for the purpose of trying to rediscover the glory of the Church and to rethink its meaning."

Dr Timothy Tingfang Lew of China had travelled ten thousand miles to attend the Conference. "I make an earnest appeal that whatever we are going to discuss, in whichever section, we must be ready to be led by the Spirit of God. If we are led to face any practical questions let us not hold the Spirit back, as we have often done in many Church assemblies by our own shortcomings." He hoped we should achieve definite results which would meet the crying needs of suffering millions all over the world, and particularly in the part of the world from which he came. Dr Lew is a member of the Legislative Department of the National Government of China, a position rather like that of a Member of Parliament in Britain.

Other speakers from the Netherlands, Hungary, France and England followed, and then the Conference separated to spend strenuous days in sectional discussions.

In the next five chapters I have summarised in turn the work of the various Sections and the discussions on their Reports in the sessions of the Conference as a whole.

CHAPTER IV

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

THE Conference appointed as chairman of the First Section Bishop Lehtonen of the Evangelical Church of Finland, as vice-chairman Principal Lofthouse of the British Methodist Church, and as reporter Professor William Manson of the Church of Scotland. Valuable preliminary work had been done by a commission which had issued not only a report but also a large book, *The Doctrine of Grace*, some years before the Conference.[1]

The subject committed to the Section covered issues which in past generations rent the Church with bitter controversy—Justification and Sanctification, The Sovereignty of God and Man's Response, Predestination and Free Will. It was, therefore, with a wave of emotion that the Conference listened to Dr Manson's notable speech in presenting the Report of their discussions.

An Outline of the Report

With deep thankfulness to God for the spirit of unity, which by His gracious blessing upon us has guided and controlled all our discussions, we agree on the following statement and recog-

[1] Edited by W. T. Whitley. (S.C.M. Press, 15s.)

nise that there is in connection with this subject no ground for maintaining division between Churches.

(i) THE MEANING OF GRACE

. . . God's grace is manifested in our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life, but above all in our redemption through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit, in the fellowship of the Church and in the gift of the Word and Sacraments.

Man's salvation and welfare have their source in God alone, who is moved to His gracious activity towards man not by any merit on man's part, but solely by His free, out-going love.

(ii) JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

God in His free out-going love justifies and sanctifies us through Christ, and His grace thus manifested is appropriated by faith, which itself is the gift of God.

Justification and Sanctification are two inseparable aspects of God's gracious action in dealing with sinful man. . . .

Faith is more than intellectual acceptance of the revelation in Jesus Christ. It is wholehearted trust in God and His promises, and committal of ourselves to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

(iii) THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND MAN'S RESPONSE

. . . By the sovereignty of God we mean His all-controlling, all-embracing will and purpose revealed in Jesus Christ for each man and for all mankind. And we wish further to insist that this eternal purpose is the expression of God's own loving and holy nature. Thus we men owe our whole salvation to His gracious will. But, on the other hand, it is the will of God that His grace should be actively appropriated by man's own will and that for such decision man should remain responsible.

Many theologians have made attempts on philosophical lines to reconcile the apparent antithesis of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, but such theories are not part of the Christian Faith. . . .

(iv) THE CHURCH AND GRACE

We agree that the Church is the Body of Christ and the blessed company of all faithful people, whether in heaven or on earth, the communion of saints. It is at once the realisation of God's gracious purposes in creation and redemption, and the continuous organ of God's grace in Christ by the Holy Spirit, who is its pervading life, and who is constantly hallowing all its parts. . . .

(v) GRACE, THE WORD, AND THE SACRAMENTS

We agree that the Word and the Sacraments are gifts of God to the Church through Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind. In both the grace of God in Christ is shown forth, given and through faith received. . . .

Among or within the Churches represented by us there is a certain difference of emphasis placed upon the Word and the Sacraments, but we agree that such a difference need not be a barrier to union.

The Report concludes with a paragraph on the meaning of the term "*sola gratia*."

They laid before the Conference, said Professor Manson, a Report that was unanimous, which contained no qualifying footnotes and no reserves. They were at one upon the fundamental things of their most holy faith, and they had placed it on record that, so far as the subject entrusted to them was concerned, they recognised no ground for maintaining division among the Churches.

Right from the start the members of the Section had been led to discard the language of polemics and the phraseology of the sixteenth century and to ask themselves the real question: "What is it that comes to us from the Gospel? What do we ourselves understand by the grace of God?" In other words, they tried to approach the matter religiously and in a positive spirit. If there had been rivalry, it was rivalry as to who should best

achieve the perfect expression of the things they held in common. So there had opened to them a vista of a confession at once Catholic and Evangelical, at once Evangelical and Catholic, towards which their eyes might turn. They believed their Report represented, within its limits, one step in that direction.

Speaking in French, Archbishop Stephan of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria declared that if the work of all the Sections proved to be as satisfactory "then the Rubicon has been crossed and we have advanced towards our aim."

"I have no criticism to make of this Report, which while it does not emphasise every point in our varied traditions, at least gives us the beginning of an agreement on points on which we are still divided," declared Professor Clavier of the Reformed Evangelical Church of France. It was questionable if the points still remaining to be agreed upon were any more delicate than those on which agreement had been reached.

Speaking from a Lutheran point of view, Professor Nygren of the Church of Sweden said he was suspicious of formulæ of unity as they usually contained concealed differences. He was thankful that the present Report had not been arrived at on these lines.

Other speakers who commended the Report were Bishop Lehtonen of Finland, Professor Shaw of the United Church of Canada, Canon Goudge of the Church of England, and Mr Powell of the Reformed Church in America. Bishop Neville Talbot, however, expressed some regret that the

Report had not recognised the difficulties in believing in the love of God presented to modern men by the riddle of life. While Professor Florovsky of the Russian Orthodox Church reminded us that the problem of Predestination, which the Report leaves an open question, was nevertheless a real problem.

The Report of this Section was eventually adopted unanimously by the Conference after one or two minor verbal alterations. Such a start to our labours was a very good omen, and we took courage.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE WORD OF GOD

THE chairman of the Second Section was Dr G. W. Richards of the Evangelical and Reformed Church of America, Dr H. G. Wood of the Society of Friends was vice-chairman, and the reporter was Dr G. A. Ankar of the Church of Sweden.

An Outline of the Report

(i) THE WORD OF GOD

. . . God calls and fashions His chosen people and speaks His Word to His prophets and apostles, interpreting to them the meaning of His action. In the fulness of time the Word, the Eternal Son of God, is manifested in Christ our Lord, the Incarnate Word, and His redeeming work. . . .

We are at one in asserting the uniqueness and supremacy of the revelation given in Christ, in whose Name alone salvation is offered to the world. But when we turn from this to the question whether we can come to know God through other and partial revelations we find differences which demand further study and discussion. None of us holds that there is a

revelation *out*side Christ which can be put on the same level as the revelation *in* Christ. But while some are prepared to recognise a *præparatio evangelica* not only in Hebrew but also in other religions, and believe that God makes Himself known in nature and in history, others hold that the only revelation which the Church can know and to which it should witness is the revelation in Jesus Christ, as contained in the Old and New Testaments.

(ii) HOLY SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

A testimony in *words* is by divine ordering provided for the revelation uttered by the *Word*. This testimony is given in Holy Scripture, which thus affords the primary norm for the Church's teaching, worship and life. . . .

There is matter for fuller discussion in the problem of the tradition of the Church and its relation to Holy Scripture. By tradition is meant the living stream of the Church's life. Thus the Orthodox East, but not it alone, . . . does not exclude from tradition some beliefs which do not rest explicitly on Scripture, though they are not in contradiction with it.

We are at one in recognising that the Church, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, has been instrumental in the formation of the Bible. But some of us hold that this implies that the Church under the guidance of the Spirit is entrusted with the authority to explain, interpret and complete the teaching of the Bible, and consider the witness

of the Church as given in tradition as equally authoritative with the Bible itself. Others, however, believe that the Church . . . is bound exclusively by the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice and, while accepting the relative authority of tradition, would consider it authoritative only in so far as it is founded upon the Bible itself. . . .

(iii) THE CHURCH: OUR COMMON FAITH

We are at one in confessing belief in the Holy Catholic Church. We acknowledge that through Jesus Christ, particularly through the fact of His resurrection, of the gathering of His disciples round their crucified, risen and victorious Lord, and of the coming of the Holy Spirit, God's almighty will constituted the Church on earth. . . .

The presence of the ascended Lord in the Church, His Body, is effected by the power of the one Spirit, who conveys to the whole fellowship the gifts of the ascended Lord, dividing to every man severally as He will, guides it into all the truth and fills it unto all the fulness of God. . . .

Christ's presence in the Church has been perpetual from its foundation, and this presence He makes effective and evident in the preaching of the Word, in the faithful administration of the Sacraments, in prayer offered in His Name, and through the newness of life whereby He enables the faithful to bear witness to Himself. Even though men often prove faithless, Christ will

remain faithful to the promise of His presence, and will so continue till the consummation of all things.

In their apprehension of this faith different persons lay a different emphasis on one or another aspect. Some lay greater stress on the perpetual and abiding Presence of Christ in His Body and with His people, while others lay greater stress on the fact that Christ is present only where His Word is truly preached and received by faith. . . .

(iv) THE CHURCH: AGREEMENTS AND DIFFERENCES

The Church, then, is the body of those on whom the call of God rests to witness to the grace and truth of God. . . . It is the sphere of redemption. Apart from the Church man cannot normally attain full knowledge of God nor worship Him in truth.

Different Churches differ in their use of the term "church." Some would apply the term not only to the visible redeemed and redemptive community, but also to the invisible company of the fully redeemed. . . . Others regard the use of the term "church" with reference to this invisible company of true Christians known only to God as misleading and unscriptural. . . . We all, however, recognise that the number of those whom God has brought into newness of life and joy in the Holy Ghost, and who have made personal response to the forgiving love

of God, has limits hidden from human vision and known only to God.

Different Churches hold different views as to the basis of Church membership. Some would hold that all who have been baptised and have not by deed or word repudiated their heritage belong to the Church and are to be regarded as members. Others would confine membership to those who have made an open profession of faith in Christ and in whose lives some measure of the spirit of Christ may be discerned. . . .

(v) THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

. . . The Church rejoices in the Kingdom of God as present whenever man obeys the will of God. But the Church always looks with glad expectation to the consummation of the Kingdom in the future. . . .

Agreeing in this faith we are not yet of one mind about (*a*) the relationship of the Church to the Kingdom, and (*b*) the extent to which the Kingdom is made known here and now. . . .

In some Churches these differing conceptions are felt to be of great moment, and act as a barrier to full intercourse, while in others they form no such obstacle but are held side by side without interfering with complete communion.

(vi) THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

The function of the Church is to glorify God in adoration and sacrificial service and to be

God's missionary to the world. She is to bear witness to God's redeeming grace in Jesus Christ in her corporate life, to proclaim the good news to every creature and to make disciples of all nations, bringing Christ's commandments to communities as well as to individuals. In relation to those who belong to her fellowship or who are placed under her influence, the function of the Church is through the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, and through Christian education, to make them into convinced Christians conscious of the reality of salvation. . . .

The Church must proclaim the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and thus encourage and guide her members to promote justice, peace and goodwill among all men and through the whole extent of life. . . .

(vii) THE GIFT OF PROPHECY AND THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

We are agreed that the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit are granted to His chosen instruments to-day, and especially to those called to be ministers of the Word of God. Not only in the corporate life and the teaching of the Church as a whole, but in each of its members according to his ability and calling, the Holy Spirit has come to dwell. Indeed all perfect and abiding revelation given to us in Christ our Lord would certainly have perished from the world had there been no inspired men to record

it and to preach it in every age. This revelation does not belong only to the past; it is also an ever-present Word by which God speaks directly to the listening soul. . . .

The call to bear witness to the Gospel and to declare God's Will does not come to the ordained ministry alone; the Church greatly needs, and should both expect and welcome, the exercise of gifts of prophecy and teaching by laity, both men and women.

(viii) "UNA SANCTA" AND OUR DIVISIONS

Everything which the New Testament teaches concerning the Church presupposes its essential unity. . . .

But we believe that the divisions of Christendom in every land are such as to hamper the manifestation of the unity of Christ's Body. We deplore this with all our hearts; and we desire the Conference to summon members of the Churches to such penitence that not only their leaders, but the ordinary men and women who hear their message, may learn that the cause of Christian unity is implicit in God's Word, and should be treated by the Christian conscience as an urgent call from God.

The Report was presented on behalf of the Section by Dr H. G. Wood with quiet impressiveness, flavoured by a captivating dash of humour. He said there was substantial agreement among them as to the nature of the Church and its

functions. With regard to their differences they did not believe that these should keep them apart in permanent divisions. They should be further considered in the atmosphere of the œcumenical movement.

Professor Adams Brown, one of the most honoured veterans of the unity movement, who played a most helpful part in the Conference both publicly and behind the scenes, declared that we were making progress towards dealing with the most difficult and delicate of all the points that separated us, in a way that some of us would have deemed impossible a dozen years ago. It was an event of great historic importance.

Dr Boulgakoff of the Russian Orthodox Church, who made several impressive contributions to the discussions in the full Conference and in the Sections, took exception, on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church, to phrases which spoke of the Church as having been " created."

Principal Urquhart of the Scottish Church College, Calcutta, appealed to the Conference not to forget the religious inheritance of ancient countries and the existence of a true " word of God " not only in the Hebrew but in other religions.

Professor Zwemer of the American Presbyterian Church, a noted figure in the missionary world, declared that the Report showed that great progress had been made in this question since the last conference at Lausanne.

Dr G. F. Barbour, a leading layman of the Church of Scotland, and one to whom, together

with the Rev. E. J. Hagan, the Conference owed much in the local arrangements, welcomed what the Report said about the prophetic ministry in relation to the continuous work of the Church. It was not something individualistic; it was part of the duty of the Church from age to age to make her Master's message known in language which each succeeding generation could understand.

Pastor Boegner of France was unhappy at the phraseology of the Report with reference to the encouragement of gifts of "prophecy" among the laity. Eager as he was for the contribution which the laity made in his own Church and in others, there had been grave dangers through uncontrolled and irresponsible movements. The word "prophecy," in France at any rate, was liable to be misunderstood.

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Gregg, asked for a clearer enunciation of the divinity of our Lord.

Principal Curtis objected strongly to an addendum which accompanied the Report as originally presented. It spoke of the difference which many felt between "Churches in which the Apostolic Succession of the ministry has been preserved and those in which it has been severed." Such a phrase as the last, he maintained, ought not to be used in the Report even in quotation, though he agreed it was important to record that there were far-reaching differences in this area of doctrine. We were not glossing over differences and difficulties which might bulk large before our further progress in seeking the Church's unity. "I have

the profoundest respect for those who lay stress on one or other view concerning the Apostolic Succession in the ministry. I have not the same regard for those who confuse that succession with a sacerdotal succession."

Among other speakers were Professor Macneill of the Baptist Church in Canada and the Archimandrite Cassian of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Report was sent to the drafting committee, and at a later session was resubmitted with alterations to meet the criticisms offered. It was then unanimously accepted.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

ALTHOUGH it was not the next topic to be dealt with by the Conference, the chapter on " The Communion of Saints " appears at this point in the final form of the Conference Report. The doctrine is one which plays a very large part in the faith and practice of many Christian communions, notably the Orthodox Churches. It was not discussed at all at the Lausanne Conference, and the Orthodox representatives in the Continuation Committee had urged that it be dealt with at Edinburgh. A committee had therefore been set up with its base in the United States, though with help from other lands, which had prepared a valuable volume on the subject.[1] For convenience this committee had been attached to the Commission on the Church's Unity in Life and Worship (Section IV of the Conference), but it was agreed to treat the subject at Edinburgh as a separate issue. The Report of a committee presided over by the Bishop of Gibraltar was presented to the Conference by Dean Sperry of Harvard University.

[1] *The Communion of Saints*. Edited by G. J. Slosser. (Harper Bros., New York.)

An Outline of the Report

After quoting Hebrews xii. 1-2, the Report says :

We use the term " communion of saints " as meaning that all who are " in Christ " are knit together in one fellowship through the Holy Spirit. This conception, which is found repeatedly in the Scriptures, occurs as a phrase of the Apostles' Creed, and gives expression to a precious truth for all Christians. With some, the phrase is regarded as synonymous with the Holy Catholic Church. For others, it is the description of a quality of life in those who are in grace. The communion of saints is not always regarded as co-extensive with the Church. For the Orthodox and certain other Churches and individual believers it means fellowship not only with living and departed Christians but also with the holy angels, and, in a very special sense, with the Blessed Virgin Mary.[1] . . .

We are agreed that the communion of saints most certainly involves the mutual sharing of both spiritual and temporal blessings on the part of all living Christians. We believe that this mutual sharing should transcend all racial, political, social and denominational barriers, in the spirit of Gethsemane and the Cross. Such,

[1] These last hold that the mother of our Lord, designated as " Theotokos " (God-bearer), the ever-Virgin, should be venerated as the highest of all saints and angels, and of all creation. In addition to the general recognition of the Communion of Saints, they venerate particular saints who are honoured by the Church, and ask their intercession and that of angels before God.

for example, is the fellowship of those associated in any truly Christian œcumenical movement. Therein we have experienced a very real, though not complete, communion of saints. Therein we humbly believe we experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Any conception of the communion of saints which is confined to the Church on earth alone is defective. Many see in the communion of saints an affirmation of the unbroken communion between the living and departed in Christ. They believe themselves to be in communion with the departed and express this in their worship. They rejoice to think that there is a growing consciousness among Christians of nearness to the redeemed in the unseen world, refusing to believe that death severs the communion of those on earth with those departed.

For some, it is sufficient to leave their departed ones with God, being linked with them through Christ. Others regard it as a Christian privilege and duty to pray for the departed. Still others, conscious of the living presence, guardianship and help of the saints, ask their prayers before God.

We all agree that we ought to remember with thankfulness those who as followers of Christ witnessed a good confession in their day and generation, thereby winning victories for Christ and His Kingdom.

We wish to make it clear that "the communion which the saints have with Christ does not make them in any wise partakers of the

substance of His Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect." In no circumstances should the cherishing of this doctrine veil or shadow the sufficient and only mediatorship of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Redeemer. Neither must this honouring of the saints descend to superstition or abuse.

In presenting the Report Dean Sperry observed that many of us would find in it material that was both unfamiliar and uncongenial. But we ought not to be disturbed at finding statements of positions which we did not accept so long as our own point of view was also stated.

It is an open secret that this subject gave both the Section and the drafting committee at least as much trouble as any other. Here was a doctrine which was regarded as central and vital by many Christians, which by many others was practically ignored, or even regarded with distrust owing to its past associations. There was no doubt, as the Report pointed out, that "the communion of saints" was a scriptural conception and was one of the clauses in the Apostles' Creed. Nevertheless, common ground was hard to find.

The Conference listened with respect to the statement by Professor Boulgakoff of the place taken in the religious life of the Orthodox Churches by the mother of our Lord, but was able to say no more than that the subject merited further study by the movement. Speakers urged that there were truths of great value in the communion of saints which Protestants for the most part did

not recognise. The Church to-day needed to be conscious of the great company of the heroes of righteousness. Beside Dr Boulgakoff, Dr Slosser of the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Rev. Clifford Nelson of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod of North America, commended the Report. The Rev. Fedor Ruppeldt thought that in the things of the unseen world it was perhaps better to say less than to want to say more. He felt the whole Report was perhaps not necessary. In its revised form the Report was subsequently adopted. But it must be confessed that there were deep cleavages in the Conference on this subject—as the Report indicates—and that not very much progress had been made towards mutual understanding.

CHAPTER VII

THE MINISTRY AND THE SACRAMENTS

The chairman of Section III was Professor D. M. Baillie of the Church of Scotland. The vice-chairman was Professor Alivisatos of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Bishop of Gloucester, Dr A. C. Headlam, was reporter. This Section, as indeed the whole Movement, was greatly indebted to the work of a preparatory commission presided over by the Bishop of Gloucester, and to a large volume prepared under their auspices.[1]

An Outline of the Report

(i) THE AUTHORITY FOR THE SACRAMENTS

. . . We are agreed that Baptism and the Lord's Supper occupied from the beginning a central position in the Church's common life, and take their origin from what was said and done by Jesus during His life on earth. Sacramental teaching and practice, therefore, are rightly founded upon the record of the New Testament. . . .

[1] *The Ministry and the Sacraments.* Edited by R. Dunkerley and A. C. Headlam. (S.C.M. Press, 18s.)

(ii) THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. The Sacraments are given by Christ to the Church as outward and visible signs of His invisible grace. They are not bare symbols, but pledges and seals of grace, and means whereby it is received.

2. Grace is bestowed in the Sacraments within the fellowship of the Church by the personal action of Christ upon the believer. Faith[1] is therefore a necessary condition for the effectual reception of grace.

3. God's gracious action is not limited by His Sacraments.[2]

4. It is our Lord Jesus Christ who through the Holy Spirit accomplishes every Sacrament, and the action of the minister of the Church is only instrumental.

5. The Sacraments are celebrated by the minister, not in virtue of any personal right of his own, but as minister of the Church.

6. Regarding the obligation of the Sacraments and the questions as to whether and in what way they are to be deemed necessary to salvation there is divergence of doctrine among us. We think that some further mutual understanding

[1] Baptist delegates desire this clause to run "faith on the part of the recipient is therefore. . . ."

[2] Orthodox delegates and some others desire to exclude from the reference of this proposition cases in which failure to receive the Sacraments is due to contempt or culpable negligence, since Sacraments are divinely instituted means of grace generally necessary for salvation.

and agreement on those points is required as a condition of full union.

(iii) THE NUMBER OF THE SACRAMENTS

. . . Most of us agree that the question of the number of the Sacraments should not be regarded as an insurmountable dividing line when we strive to attain to a united Church. . . .

(iv) VALIDITY

1. We agree that the Sacraments practised by any Christian Church which believes itself to be observing what Christ appointed for His Church are means of grace to those who partake of them with faith.

2. Confusion has sometimes been introduced by the use of the term "valid" in the two following senses:

(*a*) It is sometimes used synonymously with "efficacious," so that the term "invalid" would imply that a Sacrament has no spiritual value and is not a means of grace.

(*b*) It is sometimes used to imply that the Sacrament has been correctly performed.

In so far as Christians find themselves obliged by loyalty to Christ and to His Church to judge that the Sacraments practised by other Christians are invalid, or doubtfully valid, they should, in the cause of Christian truth and charity, do all in their power to see that the precise

meaning of their judgment, and the grounds on which they are obliged to make it, are clearly understood.

Many of us are of opinion, and desire to record our belief, that, although it is the duty of a Church to secure that Sacraments should be performed regularly and canonically, yet no judgment should be pronounced by any Church denying the "validity" of the Sacraments performed by any Christian Church which believes itself to be observing what Christ appointed for His Church.

A special difficulty in regard to union arises from a great difference in doctrine which must not be under-estimated. Those Churches which adhere to the doctrine of the Church from the age of the Great Councils to the Reformation regard it as one of the conditions for the validity of any Sacrament except Baptism (and in some cases, Marriage) that it should be performed by a validly ordained or consecrated minister. Thus to them the validity of Holy Order is one of the indispensable conditions of the validity of other Sacraments. On the other hand some other Christians do not hold ordination to be a Sacrament of Christ's institution, yet hold that an ordained minister is the proper minister of the Eucharist. Other Christians again hold that ordination is a Sacrament, but do not hold it to be an essential condition of the validity of other Sacraments, that they should be ministered by a validly ordained presbyter or bishop.

3. We believe that every Sacrament should be

so ordered that all may recognise in it an act performed on behalf of the universal Church.

4. To this end there is need of an ordained ministry recognised by all to act on behalf of the universal Church in the administration of the Sacraments.

NOTE.—The Orthodox delegates submit the following statement:

Validity.—As regards the validity of Sacraments the Orthodox delegates would like to confine themselves only to the following statement: According to the Orthodox doctrine valid Sacraments are only those which are (1) administered by a canonically ordained and instituted minister and (2) rightly performed according to the sacramental order of the Church.

They regard it therefore as unnecessary to accept any other document on this matter presented by the Conference.

(v) BAPTISM

. . . Baptism is a gift of God's redeeming love to the Church; and, administered with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is a sign and seal of Christian discipleship in obedience to our Lord's command.[1] It is

[1] Baptist delegates desire to add as follows: As regards the above statement which has been passed by their brethren who practise infant baptism, the Baptists could accept it as applying to the baptism of believers, *i.e.* of those who are capable of making a personal confession of faith. In practising the baptism of believers only, they hold that they are maintaining the practice of baptism as it is found in

generally agreed that the united Church will observe the rule that all members of the visible Church are admitted by Baptism.

In the course of discussion it appeared that there were further elements of faith and practice in relation to Baptism about which disagreement existed. . . .

(vi) THE EUCHARIST

1. We all believe that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, though as to how that Presence is manifested and realised we may differ. Every precise definition of the Presence is bound to be a limiting thing, and the attempt to formulate such definitions and to impose them on the Church has itself been the cause of disunity in the past. . . .

2. We are throughout in the realm of Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that the blessing and the gift are given. The Presence, which we do not try to define, is a spiritual presence.

(vii) THE MINISTRY

A

The consideration of this subject took its start from the Report prepared by Commission III on the Ministry and Sacraments.

the New Testament in the Apostolic Church, and also the principle which is laid down on page 27 of the Report of Commission III, to this effect, viz.: "The necessary condition of receiving the grace of a Sacrament is the faith of the recipient." They believe that children belong to God and that no rite is needed to assure His grace for them. This statement of the Baptists was accepted also by a representative of the Disciples of Christ on behalf of that body.

The following statements derived in substance from that Report are accepted by the Conference as providing a broad foundation for a common understanding of the nature and functions of the ministry:

1. The ministry was instituted by Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, "for the perfecting of the saints . . . the upbuilding of the body of Christ," and is a gift of God to the Church in the service of the Word and Sacraments.

2. This ministry does not exclude but presupposes the "royal priesthood" to which all Christians are called as the redeemed of Jesus Christ.

3. Ordination to the ministry, according to New Testament teaching and the historic practice of the Church, is by prayer and the laying-on of hands.

4. It is essential to a united Church that it should have a ministry universally recognised.

It must be acknowledged, however, that even in connection with these statements different interpretations are to be reckoned with.

For example, while all would agree that the ministry owes its origin to Jesus Christ and is God's gift to the Church, there are differences of judgment regarding the sense in which we may say that the ministry was "instituted" by our Lord.

Again, those who agree in accepting the laying-on of hands as the form of ordination differ on the meaning to be attached to the rite,

or on the question by whom it should be administered.

Further fundamental differences of interpretation arise in connection with the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. In Episcopal Churches it has been thought of both as the succession of bishops in the principal sees of Christendom, handing down and preserving the Apostles' doctrine, and as a succession by laying-on of hands. From early times this double succession has been associated with the stewardship of the Sacraments, and is regarded by certain Churches as constituting the true and only guarantee of sacramental grace and right doctrine. This view is represented by the statement formulated by the delegates of the Orthodox Church at Lausanne. . . .

Other Anglicans would interpret the Succession in a more general way to mean the transmission from generation to generation of the authority of ministerial oversight over both clergy and laity in the Church, and they regard it as both a symbol and a bond of unity.

In communions of the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition the view is held that the true Apostolic Succession is manifested in a succession of ordination by presbyteries duly constituted and exercising episcopal functions, and in the succession of presbyters in charge of parishes, with special emphasis on the true preaching of the Word and the right administration of the Sacraments. . . .

Other communions, while unaccustomed to use

the term "Apostolic Succession" would accept it as meaning essentially, or even exclusively, the maintenance of the Apostles' witness through the true preaching of the Gospel, the right administration of the Sacraments, and the perpetuation of the Christian life in the Christian community. . . .

B

In its brief consideration of the form which the ministry might take in the united Church of the future, the Conference started from the following formula in the Report of the Lausanne Conference:

> "In view of (1) the place which the Episcopate, the Councils of Presbyters and the Congregation of the faithful respectively had in the constitution of the early Church, and (2) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems of government are each to-day, and have been for centuries, accepted by great communions in Christendom, and (3) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems are each believed by many to be essential to the good order of the Church, we therefore recognise that these several elements must all, under conditions which require further study, have an appropriate place in the order of life of a reunited Church, and that each separate communion, recalling the abundant blessing of God vouchsafed to its ministry in the past, should gladly

bring to the common life of the united Church its own spiritual treasures."

The acceptance of the "historic Episcopate" carries with it the acceptance of the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons. Many would hold that such acceptance does not require any one dogmatic determination of the doctrine concerning the ministry, but all who value the "historic Episcopate" hold that it should not be interpreted apart from its historical functions.

In a united Church the intimate association of the presbyters in council with the bishop, and of the laity with both, in the government of the Church, should be conserved or restored. Thus the Episcopate would be both constitutional and representative of the whole Church.

If the ministry of the united Church should sufficiently include characteristic elements from the episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems, the present adherents of those systems would have recognised each other's places in the Church of God, all would be able to find a spiritual home in the united Church, and the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession would, upon a common basis of faith, attain to the fulness which belongs to it by referring at once to the Word, to the ministry and the Sacraments and to the life of the Christian community. . . .

The foregoing suggestions are put forward in the knowledge that they contain features

which at the present stage may be unacceptable to some Churches on both wings of the Movement, but we are confident that, where the will to unite exists, the Holy Spirit will enable the Churches in coming years to improve and develop these first tentative suggestions.

We are alike called of God to pray and to labour by every means for the promotion of this common aim, recognising that the future or ultimate form to be assumed by the united Church must depend not only on the experience of the past, but above all, upon the continued direction of the Holy Spirit.

This Report proved the most contentious of all, but the discussions well illustrated the great achievement of the Conference in the entirely frank statement of profound differences of opinion in an atmosphere of complete friendliness. Like all those who presented Reports, Professor D. M. Baillie made an admirable speech. He did not in any way seek to cover up the difficulties. The Report as presented had a large number of qualifications and footnotes regarding particular points of view. Even so the Report was "undoubtedly far ahead of any agreement which the Churches themselves have ever reached or which is even in sight." The agreement of the Section was not a matter of compromise but of genuine understanding, and indeed of mutual instruction and enrichment. "I believe," he remarked, "that in this Movement something is happening which has not happened for generations in the way of

genuine rapprochement between the various communions of the Church of Christ. If it can happen on the ground of Ministry and Sacraments which has been by far the most fruitful source of strife and schism in the history of the Church, then it can happen on any ground, and if it can happen in a conference it can also happen in the Churches themselves. It will not happen in a day, perhaps not even in a generation. I have no desire to exaggerate the agreement we have reached or to minimise the tremendous difficulties which yet remain, but I do wish to express the conviction that something is here happening which is abundantly worth while."

The Bishop of Gloucester said he was a little disappointed with the Report, not because there was anything in it, as far as he was aware, with which he could not agree but because he did not think it would be as helpful in the years to come as he had hoped it might be.

Pastor Boegner, however, described the document as an invaluable starting-point on the road to a united Church, though it was only fair to add that it was a starting-point rather than a goal.

The Report was a very vulnerable one, declared Principal Mackenzie of Wilson College, Bombay. It had far too many notes and qualifications, yet there were in it things of tremendous value to the cause of unity in such a land as India. " We have got to unite in India in any case. That is absolutely essential. What I hope will not happen is a great cleft between the so-called Catholic Churches and the so-called Protestant Churches. I hope we

shall be able to conserve all that is valuable both in Catholic and in Evangelical tradition."

An appeal to the Conference, which bore fruit in later revision, was made by Dr Peel of the Congregational Union of England for a warmer and more positive note in reference to the Society of Friends. We must express our resolve to work to the uttermost to find a way in which the Friends could be included in any future united Church.

Among other speakers were Bishop Palmer, formerly of Bombay, and Dr Angus Dun of America, who tried to simplify the somewhat complicated form of the Section on the Ministry, with ultimate good results when the drafting committee reported.

Mr C. T. Le Quesne, K.C., of the Baptist Union of Great Britain referred to the prolonged discussion of the Section regarding Baptism and the statement of the Baptists' position which the Report contained. He also intervened at another point to make it clear that a great many Free Churchmen could not be said to have accepted the principle of the Episcopate being essential to a united Church.

Bishop Azariah urged the importance of maintaining the place of Baptism in the life of the Church, in the light of his experience in India.

Amendment was called for by Archdeacon Monahan in the references to sacrifice in relation to the Eucharist; the Bishop of Lincoln was able to produce a revision which satisfied both the Archdeacon and the Conference.

Archbishop Germanos and others emphasised

the adherence of the Orthodox Church to the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons, based upon the unbroken Apostolic Succession, and their inability to come to agreement on these questions with many of the Churches represented. But the Orthodox delegates prayed that God would guide us all to union even in regard to this difficult point of disagreement.

Baron van Boetzelaer van Dubbeldam of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands thought that we were only at the beginning of a long way, which would demand a great amount of time and patience.

Mr Eric Hayman of the Society of Friends thought that the Report showed a certain coldness and lack of concern for the whole sacramental quality of life, which certainly did not reflect the Quaker view.

Canon Douglas of the Church of England reminded us that we must keep open the door for the great Church of Rome.

One could not help wondering throughout the lengthy discussion whether after all we were any further forward in this realm of Ministry and Sacraments than at Lausanne ten years ago. It is doubtful if any further agreement has been achieved. Yet there is great gain in confronting the different traditions with one another in an atmosphere of both frankness and friendliness. It is only by the clear statement and the sympathetic understanding of at present irreconcilable positions in relation to Baptism, the Lord's Supper and the Ministry, that we can ever hope to work

our way towards a common mind. Here, as often at the Conference, the wisdom of the Archbishop's statement became obvious—that the root of our differences lay in our views of the nature of the Church. It is to this that the Movement must bend its closest attention during the next period of its work.

The Report, bristling with provisos, was ultimately accepted by the Conference. It merits the closest study.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH'S UNITY IN LIFE AND WORSHIP

THE chairman of Section IV was the Rev. M. E. Aubrey of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Moderator of the Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches. The Rev. F. C. Wei of China was vice-chairman, while Dean Sperry of the Congregational Church in the United States was the reporter. Splendid work was done by a series of committees in America in preparing for this Section. In addition to the statement on *Objective Progress in Church Unity*, referred to in Chapter II of this present book, and that on *The Communion of Saints* (see page 52), valuable volumes had been made available on *The Meanings of Unity*, *The Non-Theological Factors in the Making and Unmaking of Church Union*, and *Next Steps on the Road to a United Church*.[1]

The Report of this Section was by far the longest of those submitted, and has inevitably been drastically shortened in the following outline. Reference must be made to the full Report.

OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

We take as the premise of our findings and our recommendations the already existing and grow-

[1] All published by Harper Bros. Edited respectively by Dr Angus Dun, Dean Sperry and Dr Adams Brown.

ing spiritual unity, experienced by Christians as love of one another, understanding of one another, and respect for one another. We believe that no visible unity, acceptable to God and to the people of God, can be achieved save on the foundation of this spiritual unity. We believe that our common experience of spiritual unity derives from the fundamental faith that the Church is the Body of Christ, and is, therefore, in principle and ideal, one. In trying to envisage the goal of our endeavours, we are not seeking to create something new; rather we are attempting to discover under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the full nature of the Church created by God in Christ. . . .

There follows a section analysing the different conceptions of Church unity commonly held, as co-operative action, inter-communion and corporate union. The Report then discusses the extent to which likeness in faith, in forms of non-sacramental worship, in sacramental faith and practice, in orders and in polity may be regarded as essential for the achievement of any or all of these forms of unity. The discussion is an illuminating one, but does not allow of further condensation and must be studied in the full Report.

The next section outlines obstacles to Church unity.

We find that the obstacles most difficult to overcome consist of elements of "faith" and "order" combined, as when some form of

Church government or worship is considered a part of the faith.

But we are led to the conclusion that behind all particular statements of the problem of corporate union lie deeply divergent conceptions of the Church. For the want of any more accurate terms this divergence might be described as the contrast between "authoritarian" and "personal" types of Church.

We have, on the one hand, an insistence upon a divine givenness in the Scriptures, in orders, in creeds, in worship.

We have, on the other hand, an equally strong insistence upon the individual experience of Divine grace, as the ruling principle of the "gathered" Church, in which freedom is both enjoyed as a religious right and enjoined as a religious duty.

We are aware that between these extremes many variations exist, expressed as well in doctrine as in organisation, worship and types of piety. These variations are combinations of the two contrasted types of Church to which we have referred.

We do not minimise the difficulties which these contrasted types of Church present to our Movement, nor are we willing to construe them as being due mainly to misunderstandings or to sin.

It is our hope and prayer that through the guidance of the Holy Spirit they may, in God's good time, be overcome.

Meanwhile it is our duty to attempt by study

to enter still more sympathetically into the experience of others, and to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

We suggest that the full range of the contrast between the two types of Church to which we have been referring, is in no wise covered by the antithesis of episcopal and non-episcopal orders.

This contrast may be expressed in many other terms. The problem of the authority of Scripture and the modes of its interpretation is the most classical instance.

The Report also refers to obstacles which are partly sociological, political, historical or cultural, and which are in many lands of very great importance.

What Can We Do to Move Towards the Unity We Should Seek?

Under this heading seventeen concrete proposals are elaborated, all of them arising out of experience, and usually out of the experience of many lands. They should be studied in detail in the Report and acted upon by all who care about the cause of Christian unity.

Recognising that widely prevailing ignorance and apathy is a principal hindrance to unity, the Report advocates the preparation of suitable literature and schemes of study for the education of the rank and file of the Churches. It

is suggested that the theological colleges might do more to instruct the future ministry concerning the beliefs of other Churches and the facts of the unity movement. The promotion of more profound study and research by scholars is also essential.

But more is needed than the communication of knowledge and ideas. The spirit of unity must be cultivated. The observance of special days of prayer is of value in this connection.

Mutual Church aid not only expresses the spirit of Christ but also fosters fellowship.

Collaboration in evangelism and social service is not only a demonstration of unity but generates the spirit which finds the continuance of division intolerable.

The Report then enumerates ten principles which ought to guide any policies of Christian co-operation.

Fellowships of unity are springing up in many parts of the world, such as the Friends of Reunion, the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, or the Fellowship of Unity in Egypt. These offer an invaluable medium for the promotion of unity.

It is suggested that national conferences on the lines of the World Conferences of Edinburgh and Oxford might be fruitful. The growing keenness of the Student Christian Movement and other youth organisations in matters of unity is welcomed, and the World Christian Youth Conference planned for 1939 is heartily commended.

Subject to proper understanding and regulation

the promotion of exchange of Church membership, of interchange of pulpits and of inter-communion, where conscience permits, is advocated.

It is urged that in some countries the conditions are now ripe for the initiation of official negotiations with a view to unity.

In certain regions, circumstances make a special demand on the Churches for co-operative action in the avoidance of overlapping and competition.

Grave problems are created when a Church has to choose between entering into unity with other denominations within the same national boundary or, on the other hand, maintaining connections with other Churches of its own order throughout the world. It is urged that close study should be given to these difficulties.

The great responsibility of Churches and Mission Boards in the West in regard to union movements among the younger Churches of Africa and the East is emphasised.

Finally, the Report refers to the importance of the proposal that a World Council of the Churches should be formed, and some necessary conditions for its full success.

Dean Sperry presented the Report of what had been jocularly described as " the practical Section." Both as chairman of the preparatory commission and as editor of the Section's work at Edinburgh, his efforts had contributed much to its value. He remarked that he had never attended so large a gathering that had been so free from dispute.

"The air we have been breathing in Edinburgh has been untainted by the rank odour of ecclesiastical politics." He spoke of the difficulty the Section had had of finding words which would please everybody and convey the same meaning to everybody. One of the things needed in the œcumenical movement, he said, amid laughter, was a glossary. It would greatly simplify our task.

The first speaker was Dr John R. Mott, who by his manifold labours in all parts of the world has probably done more than any living man to promote Christian co-operation. Observing the alertness and eagerness with which he threw himself into the labours of the Conference behind the scenes as well as in public, one found it hard to believe the assertion of the Conference *Who's Who* that Dr Mott had passed his seventy-second birthday; there was no younger man in the Conference. He recalled the World Missionary Conference of 1910 in that very Hall, of which he had been chairman (though he did not say so), and expressed the opinion that it had been the most creative gathering of modern times in the life of the Church. The same might be said in later years of our present Conference if we took pains to give a real lead. The most important action of the World Missionary Conference—indeed, strictly speaking, its only action—was the formation of the committee that developed into the International Missionary Council. Of all the proposals in our present Report the most strategic was the last, which commended to the Churches the formation of a World Council.

That would make possible the carrying out of all the other findings. The path to unity, said Dr Mott, was beset with difficulties. But these might be our salvation, because they would call out our latent energies. We needed them to show us our need of each other and to draw from God fuller manifestations of His power. Christian unity was not an end in itself. It was a means to a further end—" that the world may believe."

There came from Bishop Palmer, formerly of Bombay, one of the most impressive speeches of the Conference, brief as it was. After saying that we must seek in other Churches for what is of value in their traditions, and not for things to criticise, he went on to urge that " in order to live in any body or family, the single members must really die in order to live in the family life. When we come to reunion we must be prepared for death as Churches. There is a necessary death in all unions. In South India we are going over the top. We are, as it were, the first wave in the attack. If we are not followed up we shall die, and die alone. But if others do follow us up, we shall die to live again."

Dr Hildt of the United Evangelical Church of Poland spoke of the value of practical aid rendered by the stronger Churches to the weaker as an evidence of true Christian unity.

An Indian followed him, Father Alexios of the Orthodox Syrian Church. His Church, he said, had something valuable to contribute to the Indian national Church that was to be, but they could not enter into any reunion scheme except on the

basis of unity in faith, doctrines, Sacraments and orders.

Dr Wissing of Holland urged that the Christian Church must learn to speak with one voice about war. A united Church would lead to a world of international friendship.

Then a Quaker declared that the most important obstacle to Church unity was still a want of mutual understanding and respect, and a lack of recognition of other Christians as being Christians. "This attitude of heart and mind," declared Professor Wigham of Dublin, "was not yet spread widely enough to form a real foundation for any other kind of unity."

"I wish quite emphatically to record my opposition to the proposal for the creation of a World Council of Churches," declared the Bishop of Gloucester. He was convinced that such a council might do a very considerable amount of harm by passing resolutions with regard to public affairs. He thought it might lead to friction between the nations.

Professor Adams Brown, on the other hand, strongly defended the formation of the Council. He said it was the one thing they were doing which the ordinary layman and woman could understand, and which would appeal to the imagination of simple people. "I regard its formation as a matter of life and death. If the Bishop of Gloucester would help us to make it the thing it ought to be and to guard against the dangers, then he will do a great service to the cause of Christ." Further reference to this great project of a World

Council of the Churches will be made in the next chapter.

It was after 11 o'clock on the night of Tuesday, 17th August, when a weary but still good-tempered and determined assembly accepted the last Section of the Report.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST SESSION

I

"THE resolution is that the Report as amended be received and commended to the consideration of the Churches." A moment's silence for the raising of hands for or against, and then amid applause the Chairman declared the resolution carried—unanimously, so far as could be judged, and certainly with no one dissenting.

The Conference had reached its last session and was putting the crown upon its labours. It was an extraordinary achievement in itself to get so lengthy and so complicated a Report drawn up, carefully debated, and accepted in so short a time by so large and representative a Conference.

The Report, it should be emphasised, was genuinely the work of the Conference. Splendid preparatory work had been done, but in no sense was anything "put across" by the organisers. As Canon Hodgson remarked, one of the most striking features of the Conference was the way in which the delegates themselves took hold of the proceedings and threw themselves whole-heartedly into the work of the Sections when the Report

was first drafted. The more the Report is examined in the light of its origin, the more remarkable a document it is seen to be.

Nor could there be any feeling on anyone's part that the Report had been pushed through when it reached the full Conference. We seemed to have time enough and no more. This was largely due to the skill, the good humour, and the entire impartiality of the Archbishop of York. No conference was ever better served by its chairman than we were, as we declared in no uncertain way at a later stage in the session. The Archbishop had expressed the warm thanks of the Conference to our hosts and particularly to the Church of Scotland, and to many other helpers. When he had finished a delegate rose from the body of the Hall and cried, "Your Grace, there is one name omitted—the Archbishop of York." The Conference then paid him a spontaneous tribute, rising to its feet with prolonged applause.

Other items on the agenda of the closing session were two speeches delivered on behalf of the Youth Group, which had been present by invitation throughout the Conference. The Rev. Oliver Tomkins of the Student Christian Movement, speaking as chairman of the Group, said that they all felt themselves committed to the lifelong pursuit of those things which the Faith and Order Movement had at heart. They had formulated certain practical proposals upon which they hoped to act. The other speaker for Youth was Mons. G. Lagny of France.

The Conference also adopted the statement on

the international situation which has been already mentioned.[1]

II

But the main business of the session, apart from the final approval of the Report, was the adoption of an Affirmation of Unity. A drafting committee had been at work on this all through the Conference. It was composed of nine delegates representing nine different communions coming from eight different countries and speaking seven different languages. "When we first got together," said Dr Ashworth of the Northern Baptist Convention of the United States, in presenting the Affirmation as chairman, "one might have reasonably doubted whether such a committee as that could have got out any sort of common statement on any subject. If the question had been one of politics, I know we might have disagreed quite violently. If it had been a question of economics we should not have been able to make a common statement. If the question had been one of theology there might have been some slight difference of opinion. I am happy to say, however, that there was no outstanding difference—none whatever. This Report comes to you as the unanimous recommendation of your committee."

After a full discussion in which several amendments were made, the Affirmation was presented to the Conference for acceptance. It was perhaps the most impressive moment of an impressive gathering, when the delegates stood in silence to

[1] Page 27.

signify as "a very solemn and deliberate act" their whole-hearted approval. Prolonged applause greeted the Chairman's announcement that the Affirmation had been made an act of the whole Conference.

This remarkable Affirmation[1] by so representative a body of Christians is addressed to the world at large, and will surely become a historic pronouncement.

With thankful hearts the delegates left the Assembly Hall and proceeded *en masse* to St Giles' Cathedral.

[1] Reprinted on pp. 97–99.

CHAPTER X

WHAT DOES "EDINBURGH" MEAN FOR THE CHURCHES?

WHILE the Conference is pouring along the Lawnmarket and the High Street to the Cathedral let us pause and take stock.

It seemed to be generally agreed among those who had been present at both Conferences that Edinburgh marked a real advance on Lausanne. In a Broadcast Speech the Archbishop of York said: "It is natural to ask how this Conference compares with that which was held ten years ago at Lausanne. Every one agrees that the progress made is astonishing. This does not mean that we are ready, or nearly ready, to formulate schemes for general reunion. That is not the work of the Conference, but must be done by the Churches themselves. But there is a complete change of atmosphere. At Lausanne there was complete personal friendliness, but the delegates were on the defensive; each group was primarily concerned to maintain its own tradition intact. And there was a good deal of impatience between those whose traditions were farthest from each other. Some thought others incredibly and intolerably subservient to past tradition, or incredibly and intolerably indifferent to it. Now all that is altered. We know enough of one another to have a complete

mutual respect all round. We all know that if we have something to teach our neighbours, we have also something to learn from them.

"This is a mark of real progress already made—the most important kind of progress. There is a larger area of actual agreement than ten years ago, but also there is a far fuller analysis of our real differences. This is possible because of the new atmosphere. At Lausanne the representatives of most denominations stuck to the traditional phrases of their official formulations; here in the friendly give and take of intimate conference the representatives of widely separated traditions have worked out co-operatively the real relations between them and the religious significance of what they hold."

The significance of the Conference may perhaps be summed up under four heads.

1. "Edinburgh" brought to those who were present, and it may well bring to the Churches in general, *a deepened consciousness of already existing Christian unity*.

"We could not seek union if we did not already possess unity," said the Archbishop in his introductory sermon. The very fact that the Conference happened at all is impressive. You had only to look around to realise the amazing diversity of nation, race and religious tradition in that Hall—perhaps on the same bench as yourself. Yet the underlying unity of us all in Christ grew more and more clear to us until we came to give it expression in the closing Affirmation.

We did not achieve a spurious unity by covering

up our differences. The unruffled atmosphere of complete friendliness went along with a complete frankness. The Rev. J. S. Whale, in commenting on the Conference in the *Christian World*, said there had been "a refreshing incisiveness and plainness of speech in the various sectional discussions—a keenness of edge in friendly controversy. . . . The various parties now seem to speak with the freedom and downrightness of friends who cannot yet agree with one another but who can at least understand one another. The difficulties are gigantic; it is quite useless to belittle this fact; but it is a good sign that we seem to be getting beyond the polite fear of hurting one another's feelings." "The Conference," he declared, "has emphasised fundamental and, as yet, irreconcilable differences against the background of a growing body of agreement."

The reality of "the holy Church throughout all the world," one, catholic and apostolic, can never have been more present to the minds and hearts of the delegates than in some of the great moments of worship at the Conference. Oxford and Edinburgh have shown us the Church as a universal reality, at once firm in the apostolic tradition and alert in facing the contemporary world.

Just over the Chairman's head in the Assembly Hall was a stained-glass window which often caught and held the eye. It represented the badge of the Church of Scotland, the burning bush with the legend *Nec Tamen Consumebatur*. Still the fire of the Divine Presence burns in the Church of Christ.

To some of us the divisions of the Church are

intolerable because they obscure that unity in Christ which we know to be more real than all our differences.

2. Edinburgh brought to the delegates, and ought to bring to the Churches, *a deepened understanding of the great and rich variety of the Christian Church.*

Many delegates after the first day of the sectional discussions thought, and some said, "These other fellows have a lot to learn." There must have been very few who did not realise before the Conference was over that we have *all* got a lot to learn.

We discovered each other at Edinburgh. For many of those present it was the first time that they had come into intimate contact in spiritual matters with those of different traditions. They came to teach; they stayed also to learn.

When Baptist and Orthodox meet for the first time, coming from the opposite poles of thought and practice, it is little wonder that they eye each other askance. "Are these people really Christian at all?" each group says of the other. But if they persist in fellowship they become conscious of a deep underlying unity. They know themselves for brothers in Christ. They discover that in many ways they are not so different as appearances might suggest. But perhaps more important, they begin to suspect that in those very doctrines and practices in which they are in reality most apart there may yet be hidden some truth of great value. They may still disagree. They may even come to see that many of the issues between them

go deeper than they at first realised. But they will learn a new respect for the other's faith and experience side by side with their disagreement.

It is an extreme illustration though not a fanciful one. The truth is easier perhaps to appreciate between those Churches that are not so far apart initially. The unity we seek, or should seek, is unity in diversity—not an absorption of other Churches by any one existing Church, or a flattening out of differences. Both in polity and in faith we are all the poorer for the lack of what others have got. And we can only share if we come into a much closer fellowship than we at present enjoy. It is only the favoured few who now have the opportunity to see something of the rich treasures possessed by Christians of other communions.

To some at Edinburgh this was brought home most clearly at the Sunday evening meetings, when spokesmen of different traditions told simply and directly of what the heritage of their own Church had meant to them.

3. "Edinburgh" brought to the delegates, and ought to bring to the Church, *a determination to act upon the unity we already have*.

Talk about unity that is not accompanied by action is dangerous. There is always a temptation to feel that if one has shared in passing a resolution, something has been done. That is seldom true. Usually, in fact, if no action follows, it may be worse than useless. Unless the delegates and those whom their words can reach do something to implement their words, better were it for us that we should never have met at all.

This business of unity has got to be made local. It must lead to closer co-operation, nationally, and, even more important, in town and village. We shall never learn the way to a larger unity until we act upon the unity we already have. In many ways it is the unbrotherly and unco-operative attitude of clergy and ministers and congregations in daily contacts that is holding up the progress of unity more than our intellectual problems of faith and order.

If the effect of "Edinburgh" is to send the delegates back to their own spheres determined to practise genuine co-operation and fellowship up to the very limit of what is now possible—in common worship and witness and service—then, when such a world conference once more assembles in God's good time, we shall face our apparently intractable theological problems with a new and truer sense of proportion.

There is no room in this volume to discuss possible forms of action in detail. The closing pages of the Official Report of the Conference suggest seventeen clearly defined forms of co-operation. There is not a parish where some of these cannot be put into practice at once. One practical step that can be taken by anyone who reads these lines is to join "The Friends of Reunion," as the Report advises. It is a fellowship of those who pledge themselves to work for the unity of the Christian Church.[1]

One of the most important of the practical steps

[1] Particulars can be obtained from the Secretary, Friends of Reunion, Annandale, North End Road, London, N.W. 11.

proposed is that the Churches should be invited to form a World Council. The desire on both sides for closer relations between the two Movements, Life and Work and Faith and Order, led to proposals being submitted to the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences. These were approved by both conferences; at Edinburgh with only one dissentient (though, as stated earlier, the Bishop of Gloucester declared that he and some others wished to record their disapproval). As a result a committee of fourteen—seven from Life and Work and seven from Faith and Order—has been set up (i) to revise and complete the plans for a World Council; (ii) to submit the complete plan to the Continuation Committee of the Edinburgh Conference; (iii) to arrange for its submission, if approved, to the Churches; (iv) to convene the World Council when it is approved by the Churches. It is needless here to discuss questions of organisation, but it is easy to see many directions in which such a body might serve the cause of Christ in the world. In particular, it would carry forward the work already begun by Oxford and Edinburgh; facilitate corporate action by the Churches; promote co-operation in study and the growth of the spirit of unity.

The Church to-day lacks the necessary organisation for it to express itself internationally. If there is to be a living universal united Christian community standing for the way of Christ in a divided and distraught world, there must be some centre for it and some voice. The proposal was considered at length at Edinburgh, first at two

meetings of a large committee of sixty members, and then at a session of the full Conference. It is clear that the idea of such a Council representing the whole non-Roman [1] Christian world, strongly captured the imagination and goodwill of the delegates as a whole.

4. The Edinburgh Conference inspired in most, if not all, of the delegates, and should inspire in the Churches, *a determination not to acquiesce in our existing disunity but to press on with further study of the causes that now keep us apart, with a view to their possible removal.*

Most of the members in all the Churches just do not care about the cause of Christian union. They are quite content to carry on as they are. They have never had brought home to them the grave hindrances imposed upon the progress of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad by our divisions. What is now the concern of a few individuals must become the responsibility of the Church as a whole.

I can understand the man who feels that he cannot conscientiously participate in a particular scheme of reunion, and who feels it is his duty to see that the truths in his denominational heritage are adequately safeguarded. A union based upon sacrifice of principle would be no gain to the Christian cause. But I cannot understand the man who is complacent with the New Testament in his

[1] Not *anti*-Roman. If the Roman Catholic Church is prepared to co-operate it will be warmly welcomed. But, as the Archbishop of York said at Oxford, "in the meantime we cannot concede that their inability to co-operate with us should hinder us from an attempt to co-operate with each other."

hands, and the facts of the world before his eyes. He may not see how to achieve union, but he ought to desire it.

Nor can I understand the people who tell us that we want Christian unity but not union. Of course there must be unity of spirit before union is either possible or desirable. But why set the two in opposition? A true unity of spirit will impel towards such union in organisation as is necessary for giving effect to the ends sought in common. Without pre-judging here the extent of organisational or organic union that is desirable, it surely cannot be maintained that the present existence of so many separated and *inevitably* competing denominations in England or in India—to go no farther—is a satisfactory expression of unity of spirit.

Doubtless it is true, as we are often reminded, that Christians have been separated for a long time and that we cannot heal the breaches in a hurry. But one could wish that the note of impatience were sounded more frequently. Even at Edinburgh one heard it very seldom—perhaps partly because the average age of the Conference was fifty-three. Is the Church to be the only body in the modern world to move slowly? Things in general move much more rapidly than a generation or two ago. Events will not wait until the Church is ready for them.

The voice of impatience was heard most clearly from the East. Dr Lew pled for definite results from the Conference. Dr Azariah, the Bishop of Dornakal, reminded us how the West was holding

up the progress of Christianity in India. "No children are happy if their parents are not on speaking terms." "The problem is one of life and death to us; do not give your aid to keep us separated."

The Bishop used an unforgettable illustration. He had been approached by the leaders of a large Hindu community which was being drawn towards Christianity. "But," they said to him, "in Hinduism we are one; in Christ we should be divided. So we hesitate." "What could I say?" the Bishop asked the Conference. . . .

Of course there is no short cut to agreement about the Sacraments and the Ministry and so forth. This is no plea for slurring over our differences as if they did not matter. It is a plea for determined and continuous study of them on a much wider scale than has ever yet taken place. We need to ask ourselves how far the causes that brought our denominations into existence are still there to keep us apart. And we need to carry farther the study begun at the Conference of the limits of agreement and disagreement permissible within one Church. When, as is notoriously the case, there are widely divergent views on many questions of faith and order *inside* existing denominations, the presence of those same divergences *between* denominations should not be made an excuse for continued separation.

"We believe," says the Report, "that the divisions of Christendom in every land are such as to hamper the manifestation of the unity of Christ's Body. We deplore this with all our

hearts; and we desire the Conference to summon members of the Churches to such penitence that not only their leaders, but the ordinary men and women who hear their message, may learn that the cause of Christian unity is implicit in God's Word, and should be treated by the Christian conscience as an urgent call from God."

CHAPTER XI

AN AFFIRMATION OF UNITY

THE Conference ended as it began, in an act of united worship. Once more we assembled in St Giles' Cathedral, enriched by many memories of the past weeks. We met in a mood of deep thanksgiving and determination.

As we stood there together in the presence of God, the Archbishop of York read once more in our hearing the moving words of the Affirmation of Unity. They form a fitting end for the Conference but they are also a declaration of purpose for the years to come.

Listen!

We are one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. We are one in allegiance to Him as Head of the Church, and as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We are one in acknowledging that this allegiance takes precedence of any other allegiance that may make claims upon us.

This unity does not consist in the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills. It is founded in Jesus Christ Himself, Who lived, died and rose again to bring us to the Father, and Who through the Holy Spirit dwells in His Church. We are one because we are all the objects of the

love and grace of God, and called by Him to witness in all the world to His glorious Gospel.

Our unity is of heart and spirit. We are divided in the outward forms of our life in Christ, because we understand differently His will for His Church. We believe, however, that a deeper understanding will lead us towards a united apprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We humbly acknowledge that our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ, and we pray God in His mercy to shorten the days of our separation and to guide us by His Spirit into fulness of unity.

We are thankful that during recent years we have been drawn together; prejudices have been overcome, misunderstandings removed, and real, if limited, progress has been made towards our goal of a common mind.

In this Conference we may gratefully claim that the Spirit of God has made us willing to learn from one another, and has given us a fuller vision of the truth and enriched our spiritual experience.

We have lifted up our hearts together in prayer; we have sung the same hymns; together we have read the same Holy Scriptures. We recognise in one another, across the barriers of our separation, a common Christian outlook and a common standard of values. We are therefore assured of a unity deeper than our divisions.

We are convinced that our unity of spirit and aim must be embodied in a way that will make it manifest to the world, though we do not yet clearly see what outward form it should take.

We believe that every sincere attempt to co-operate in the concerns of the Kingdom of God draws the severed communions together in increased mutual understanding and goodwill. We call upon our fellow-Christians of all communions to practise such co-operation ; to consider patiently occasions of disunion that they may be overcome ; to be ready to learn from those who differ from them ; to seek to remove those obstacles to the furtherance of the Gospel in the non-Christian world which arise from our divisions ; and constantly to pray for that unity which we believe to be our Lord's will for His Church.

We desire also to declare to all men everywhere our assurance that Christ is the one hope of unity for the world in face of the distractions and dissensions of the present time. We know that our witness is weakened by our divisions. Yet we are one in Christ and in the fellowship of His Spirit. We pray that everywhere, in a world divided and perplexed, men may turn to Jesus Christ our Lord, Who makes us one in spite of our divisions ; that He may bind in one those who by many worldly claims are set at variance ; and that the world may at last find peace and unity in Him ; to Whom be glory for ever.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

Official Publications of the Faith and Order Movement

The Report. Copies can be obtained (free) from the Secretary, World Conference of Faith and Order, Cheyney Court, Winchester.

Convictions. Edited by Leonard Hodgson. 8s. 6d.

The Doctrine of Grace. Edited by W. T. Whitley. 15s.

The Ministry and the Sacraments. Edited by R. Dunkerley. 18s.

Faith and Order: Proceedings of the World Conference at Lausanne, 1927. Edited by H. N. Bate. 4s.

Other Literature on Christian Union

Christian Unity. A. C. Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester. 2s. 6d.

Toward Reunion: What the Churches Stand For. Edited by Hugh Martin. 1s. 6d.

Christian Union in South India. W. J. Noble. 2s.

The Church Catholic. N. Micklem. 1s. 6d.

Moving Towards Unity. E. S. Woods. 6d.

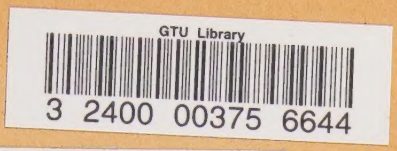
Lausanne 1927: *An Interpretation.* E. S. Woods. 2s. 6d.

The Divisions of the Church: A Historical Guide. Edited by E. G. Parry. 1s.

Are We Uniting? Prospects of Reunion in England. Hugh Martin. 2d.

All published by the Student Christian Movement Press.

Printed by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh



DATE DUE

APR 27 2003

AUG 12 2003

GAYLORD PRINTED IN U.S.A.

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500

All items are subject to recall.

34. Nature of the Church

57. Apostles — 12 years

70

Have never
Refused any
Valid.